(i) **Arms and ammunitions** and the allied items of defence equipment, defence air-crafts and warships;

(ii) **Atomic energy** (except in the areas related to the generation of nuclear power and applications of radiation and radio-isotopes to agriculture medicine and non-strategic industries);

(iii) **Railway transport** Government has also decided that IOC, ONGC and GAIL be treated as flagship companies in the oil sector where Government shareholding would not be reduced below 51%. All other non-stragetic Public Sector Enterprises can be disinvested.

Disinvestment of sick PSUs

238. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of enterprises in the public sector which have become sick;

(b) the employment in these enterprises;

(c) whether Government propose to wind up these enterprises or sell them at whatever price market can offer; and

(d) the manner in which the consequent unemployment is proposed to be tackled?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) There were 68 Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) registered with the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) as on 31.10.2002.

(b) The total number of employees in CPSUs including sick enterprises were 1.74 million as on 31st March, 2001 as per Public Enterprises Survey 2000-2001.

(c) Out of the 68 Central PSUs, Ministry of Disinvestment had returned 4 cases namely, Bharat Brakes and Valves Ltd., Bharat Pumps and Compressors Ltd., RBL Ltd. and Praga Tools Ltd. to the Administrative Ministry as they were found to be unsaleable. Disinvestment in 9 PSUs

namely, Instrumention Ltd., Bhaithwaite & Co., Bharat Opthalmic Glass Ltd., National Instruments Ltd., Hindustan Cables Ltd., Tyre Corporation Ltd., NEPA Ltd., Hindustan Salts Ltd. and Burn Standard Co. Ltd. is being pursued. In the case of Jessop & Co. Ltd., the sale agreement has not yet been signed in view of the stay order granted by the Hon'ble High Court, Kolkata.

(d) Unemployment cannot be associated with disinvestment. Employment in the Public Sector fell from 2.19 million in 1991-92 to 1.81 million in 1999-2000 even before disinvestment through strategic sale was started. In some cases, employment has increased after disinvestment. There has been no case of post-disinvestment retrenchment so far and suitable provisions are incorporated in the Transaction Agreements for safeguarding the interests of the employees.

Differences over disinvestment of oil companies

†239. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that differences have cropped up over disinvestment of the oil companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that there is an apprehension of exploitation of consumers due to the monopoly of private companies on oil companies; and

(d) if so, the measures being taken by Government to retain control on these companies?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Such apprehension as may exist of exploitation of consumers through monopoly of private companies on oil companies are unwarranted. Government would continue to exercise regulatory control through the provisions of relevant Act-such as the Competition Act, 2002,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.